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**From:** Sysum, Scott  
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**Subject:** Info Only: Department of the Interior (DOI) issues draft programmatic environmental assessment (EA) regarding the use of hydraulic fracturing on the Southern California Outer Continental Shelf.

## **Federal**

**Department of the Interior (DOI) issues draft programmatic environmental assessment (EA) regarding the use of hydraulic fracturing on the Southern California Outer Continental Shelf.** On February 22, DOI issued a draft EA that evaluates the potential environmental effects associated with offshore hydraulic fracturing on the Outer Continental Shelf off the coast of Southern California. The draft EA was required as part of two recently settled National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) lawsuits in which several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) alleged that DOI had failed to consider the environmental effects of offshore hydraulic fracturing. DOI agreed to suspend further permitting of hydraulically fractured wells until the NEPA review is complete. In the draft EA, DOI evaluates potential effects on air quality, water quality, wildlife and the likelihood of accidents associated with well stimulation and fluid handling. The draft EA concludes that the potential environmental effects are not significant enough to require an environmental impact statement. The draft EA identifies continued permitting of hydraulically fractured wells as the preferred option, but also considers three other options, including prohibiting the use of hydraulic fracturing on existing leases. DOI will accept comments on the draft EA until March 23.

v/r  
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